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AUTHOR Cylke, Frank Kurt
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ABSTRACT

This report describes activities of the talking-book program of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the Library of Congress, with emphasis on activities conducted in cooperation with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) library program. First, the overall NLS program in the U.S. which circulates more than 23 million items and produces 2 million recordings of 2,000 print books a year as well as audio magazines and braille magazines is described. The paper reviews the history of the service since 1931, its collection, the equipment the library has designed and lends to eligible readers, and the library's distribution network. The report then details Canada/U.S. cooperative activities in the following areas: sale of audio/braille books; sale of audio/braille magazines; purchase of CNIB books by NLS; sale of audiocassette containers; maintenance of a Union Catalog of special-format books; development of a Birdsong Tutor program; development of the Reader Enrollment and Delivery System program; development of a "train the trainer" volunteer repair program; relationships between the Braille Departments of both institutions; the convening of an international conference; cooperation on advisory/technical committees; development of Friends of Libraries programs; and cooperation on copyright issues. (DB)

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National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Library of Congress

1291 Taylor Street NW, Washington, DC 20542; telephone (202) 707-5100; fax (202) 707-0712; Internet nls@loc.gov

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A PROGRAM OVERVIEW WITH EMPHASIS UPON COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

by

Frank Kurt Cylke
Director

Canadian National Institute for the Blind
St. John's, Newfoundland
CANADA

September 29, 1996

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I am delighted to be here today to renew friendships and to meet all of you who support use of talking book programs or who will perhaps use one sometime in the future.

Through the years I have enjoyed dealing with Euclid Herie, Gary Magarrell, and Jim Sanders at meetings of the World Blind Union both in Canada and in the United States. My most recent acquaintance is with your president, Gary Homer.

I am here in St. John's primarily to talk a bit about the talking-book program that is designed to bring recreational material and more serious reading matter to blind and physically handicapped individuals in the United States and how, remaining within our legal mission, we cooperate and coordinate with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind library program.

PROGRAM

Collectively there are approximately three million people in the United States who cannot read print because of a visual or physical situation. Individually they are totally blind or partially blind, or they have some other personal physical situation that prohibits the reading of print. At the Library of Congress we--the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped--along with a network of cooperating

libraries, select, manufacture, and distribute such materials. About half a million individuals use the Library of Congress-based program. Last year we selected two thousand print books and produced two million copies in recorded form. We also produced thirty-six audio magazines in seven million separate issues. We manufactured a number of braille titles -- as well as thirty-six braille magazines in four hundred thousand separate issues. We circulated more than twenty-three million books and magazines through a national network of 143 regional and subregional libraries.

HISTORY

The Library of Congress program that is now the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was created on March 3, 1931, when President Herbert Hoover signed into law the Pratt-Smoot Act.

A national reading program was needed because the difficulty of producing, storing, and shipping large braille volumes in small quantities made production by private industry unprofitable. Service-oriented nonprofit groups could produce braille books but only in limited numbers, and most were religious works, textbooks, or books for young readers. The

demand for general material had increased as more people graduated from schools for blind students.

In 1933, with development of the long-playing 33-1/3 rpm record and phonograph for this program, our Congress authorized a major expansion to include recorded materials. Talking books have been provided since 1934. Congress again extended the program in 1952 to include blind children as well as blind adults, in 1962 to provide music instructional materials and scores, and again in 1966 to include individuals with physical handicaps that prevent them from reading standard print.

The ensuing years have been marked by steady growth in the program's scope and technical achievements. Magnetic tape cassettes and flexible discs make up the largest share of books and magazines distributed today.

COLLECTION

Books for inclusion in the program are selected on the basis of their appeal to a wide range of interests. Bestsellers, biographies, fiction, and how-to-do-it books are in great demand. The national book collection currently contains more than 275,000 titles in a total of thirty million copies. As I noted earlier, each year about two thousand titles--two million copies--

are mass-produced for distribution through network libraries. Most books are produced on cassette; some are on flexible disc. Books expected to be extremely popular are produced on flexible disc in many copies and circulated to borrowers within several months of their publication in print form. As I mentioned, free subscriptions to a total of more than seventy popular magazines on disc and in braille are also offered.

We utilize the production capabilities of commercial, nonprofit, and volunteer outlets to produce needed quantities of books. The quantity of any book produced is dependent on expected reader demand and the pertinency of the work to the network library collections. Numbers vary from book to book.

Additional reading materials are produced by regional and subregional libraries as well as by other governmental and volunteer, nonprofit agencies to provide books of local and regional interest and other publications not a part of the NLS collection. Persons interested in special music materials receive them directly from our Music Library. These materials are available in large print as well as in audio and braille formats.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment has been especially designed and produced by

Library of Congress personnel and is loaned free to eligible readers as long as our materials are being borrowed.

Talking Book Machine. Plays hard and flexible discs at speeds of 33-1/3, 16-2/3, and 8-1/3 rpm.

Cassette Book Machine. A machine for playback only, operating at speeds of 1-7/8 ips (inches per second), the speed of commercially recorded material, and 15/16 ips, the NLS standard speed. Includes 2-track and 4-track capability.

Easy Machine. A cassette machine that is simple in operation. Once a cassette is inserted it plays through all four tracks without stopping, if one wishes. This machine also accommodates standard cassettes.

Combination Machine. Plays both discs and cassettes as previously described. This is for the sophisticated user -- professional or student.

Headphones. For those who wish to read without disturbing others.

Pillowspeaker. For those confined to bed and unable to wear headphones.

Amplifier. For the significantly deaf.

Tone-Arm Clip. A plastic device attached to the talking-book machine tone arm for those who have difficulty in grasping the tone arm.

Extension Levers. Provided for readers who have difficulty in operating the key controls of the cassette book machine.

Breath Switches. For those who cannot use their hands.

NETWORK

We administer the national reading program through a cooperative network that has grown from the original 18 libraries in 1931 to 143 regional and subregional libraries. This network serves the readership of nearly 780,000, circulating more than twenty-three million recorded and braille books and magazines each year. It is the oldest, largest, and, I believe, most sophisticated, network in the United States--perhaps the world. With the exception of the machine-lending agencies, it is run on a "handshake."

The network is divided into four regions of approximately thirteen states each: North, South, West, and Midlands. Libraries in each region also belong to their own regional conference, headed by a chairperson and other officers elected

by the librarians.

Each region is served by a multistate center, an NLS agency that functions as a materials-support unit--warehouse--for its specified network libraries. The center houses national program materials and lends them to libraries. It also stores and ships to network libraries backup supplies of sound reproduction equipment, publications, forms, and other materials.

As of 1995, our network had fifty-seven regional libraries in forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Routine services include circulation, outreach, publicity, tape duplication, equipment assignment, publication distribution, reader advisory services, reference, and audio/braille production of local-interest materials.

Subregional libraries--numbering more than eighty--are local--usually public--libraries designated by a regional library with NLS approval, to provide complete service to the residents of a specified part of the regional library's jurisdiction. Generally, their collections include current recorded cassette and disc books only. Subregional libraries provide book services, publicity, reader assistance, and enlistment of public and volunteer support.

Machine-lending agencies are state and local agencies--

usually regional libraries--designated by NLS to receive, issue, and control federally owned and supplied equipment, including specially designed record players, cassette machines, and accessories.

Deposit collections include materials furnished to separate institutions, such as nursing homes, convalescent centers, hospitals, and public libraries with walk-in services. Demonstration collections are used for display and information purposes, or to provide emergency service to readers.

SUMMARY U.S. ACTIVITY
PREFACE TO COOPERATIVE CANADA/U.S. ACTIVITY

During the past few minutes I have briefly touched upon our library program in the United States. During the next few minutes, I will touch upon a few of the cooperative efforts staff members in Canada and the United States have been and are pursuing to the mutual benefit of eligible library users in both countries.

SALE OF AUDIO/BRAILLE BOOKS

One of the longest-standing agreements involves the sales of NLS books to CNIB. Since 1980, when the first two-year agreement was signed, more than 7,912 titles have been sold.

The agreement sets forth requirements and procedures for purchase. The agreement recognizes CNIB as the sole purchasing agent for Canada.

Before purchasing NLS books, CNIB must obtain written permissions from copyright holders and submit the signed permissions with the book purchase orders for approval. After checking the permissions for correctness, NLS approves the sale, forwarding the book order and permissions to the appropriate producer. The producer then undertakes the actual sale. The producer is required to sell NLS titles to CNIB at a cost not less than the cost that the producer charges to NLS.

In 1988, after a feasibility survey of American publishers, NLS implemented a procedure to clear copyright on behalf of Canada for the at-cost sale of NLS titles to Canada. This procedure involved the addition of the following line on the NLS copyright permissions request form: "Canadian libraries and agencies request permission to purchase this edition at cost for use with eligible blind and physically handicapped readers." Now NLS sends the pink copies of approved clearances to CNIB, and CNIB submits these forms as approved clearances when sending purchase orders to NLS.

Year	Braille	Recorded	TOTAL
1980/81	0	150	150
1982	0	575	575
1983	4	187	191
1984	20	159	179
1985	61	145	206
1986	106	129	235
1987	243	604	847
1988	117	225	342
1989	146	506	652
1990	286	880	1,166
1991	175	372	547
1992	224	529	753
1993	98	617	715
1994	109	281	390
1995	195	497	692
1996 (11 mos.)	95	177	272
TOTAL	1,879	6,033	7,912

SALE OF AUDIO/BRAILLE MAGAZINES

In 1980, NLS began requesting permissions from magazine publishers to make NLS-produced magazines available for sale at cost to foreign libraries and agencies serving blind and physically handicapped individuals. Since that time, CNIB has purchased subscriptions to NLS magazines.

The sale of NLS magazines abroad requires NLS approval. Once a non-US agency is approved to purchase NLS magazines, NLS so informs the magazine producers. CNIB purchase orders for NLS magazines are sent to NLS for approval, and NLS subsequently forwards the orders to the appropriate producers who arrange to make the at-cost sale.

Currently, CNIB purchases over 150 braille subscriptions,

including *Better Homes and Gardens, Book World, Children's Digest, Consumer Research, Cooking Light, Fortune, Inside Sports, Jack & Jill, Ladies Home Journal, National Geographic, Playboy, Poetry, Science News,* and *Seventeen.*

PURCHASE OF CNIB BOOKS BY NLS

For a number of years, NLS has purchased talking books produced by CNIB. To date, NLS has purchased a total of 614 audio titles for a foreign library collection. Of these, 551 titles are in French and 63 titles are in English, including 16 titles that were first acquired for the World Literature Book Club project in 1989-1990.

NLS and CNIB are now investigating the possibilities of NLS's purchasing subscriptions to the French-language *Reader's Digest*.

SALE OF AUDIO CASSETTE CONTAINERS

In 1996, CNIB wished to purchase cassette mailing containers using the same source as NLS. Permission was granted for the container producer to use one of the NLS-owned plastic injection molds after necessary modifications had been made. A purchase agreement was reached directly between CNIB and the producer for the production of ten thousand units.

Containers are yellow rather than NLS green, and do not have the Library of Congress logo.

With tool modifications now complete and the temperature, pressure, and time settings required for the yellow colorant all well defined, the producer will be able to produce future lots of cassette mailing containers for CNIB with little delay.

UNION CATALOG

NLS maintains a Union Catalog of special-format books that represent the holdings of several libraries and agencies in the United States and abroad as well as the holdings of NLS itself. Some of the other agencies include: Recording for the Blind, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, and the Xavier Society, among many others. Currently more than 250,000 titles are listed in the catalog. The catalog is available via the INTERNET and is also issued quarterly on microfiche. In 1997, a quarterly catalog will be available for sale on CD-ROM as well. At the present time, eight copies of the beta-test version are provided CNIB and other Canadian organizations.

The goal in maintaining the Union Catalog is to build a tool for promoting inter-library loan among all institutions involved.

Books in braille or on cassette are a scarce resource that must be maximized. We encourage all agencies maintaining collections for blind and physically handicapped readers to consider listing their titles. All books that are listed must be available for international loan or sale.

Through a cooperative arrangement with the National Library of Canada, the maintainers of a Canadian national database of books in special format, NLS has been loading the catalog records of Canadian libraries, including CNIB. NLS has further processed these records by removing holdings information of nonparticipating libraries (i.e., libraries who are unable to make international interlibrary loans) and by adding subject headings, Dewey Decimal classification numbers, and other elements. The Union Catalog now contains over fifty thousand records from sixteen Canadian libraries. CNIB holdings total over twenty thousand records--(eighteen thousand from CNIB, Toronto, two thousand from Montreal).

Just last week, it was announced that forms-based access to the catalog is now available as WebBLND on the World Wide Web. As a result, it is now possible to search the online catalog and its companion file of in-process records without using the complex Scorpio command set. Catalog users can search by

author, title, subject, series, and book number headings as well as by keyword. This form of access will be of interest to international patrons, because it requires no prior knowledge of Scorpio. To find the new catalog interface, one simply goes to the NLS homepage at http://lcweb.loc.gov/nls and follows the link to WebBLND.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Birdsong Tutor

In 1989, NLS and CNIB collaborated with the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology to produce a recorded guide to the sounds made by common birds, frogs, insects, and mammals of the eastern United States and Canada. Called A Birdsong Tutor, the narrated guide introduced readers to common sounds of the natural world and specific habitats where they are customarily heard.

READS

The Reader Enrollment and Delivery System (READS) is designed to assist small and medium-sized NLS libraries and affiliated support agencies in distributing and tracking talking books, recorded circulating magazines, and playback equipment provided to the blind and physically handicapped. It provides much of the functionality of mainframe or minicomputer

systems, but with the interactivity and low cost of microcomputers. NLS has given READS to CNIB at no cost. Recently, CNIB created an audio book circulation function to the Louis Braille Institut Nazareth, and READS has transferred with it. NLS also provides READS to the Fraser Valley Library in British Columbia.

Train the Trainer

NLS and the Telephone Pioneers of America (TPA) developed and implemented a volunteer repair program (VRP) to enhance the training and knowledge of all NLS repair volunteers through a "train the trainer" concept. At the request of the Manager, Technical Aids Services at CNIB, two NLS Material Development Office staff members traveled to Toronto, Canada, on June 4-5, 1996, to provide the training. They offered training to thirteen repair volunteers from the provinces across Canada. In addition to the training, the repair volunteers were provided equipment and test tapes to use in the repair of cassette book machines in order to train other groups in Canada.

Braille Relationships

The Braille Development Section of NLS has long had a strong, cooperative relationship with the Braille Department of CNIB. The foundation of this relationship has been membership

on the board and various technical committees of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA). Staff have worked closely in the development of braille codes and the development of instructional materials and certifications.

In recent years, CNIB has been on advisory committees for the National Literary Braille Competency Test currently in development. CNIB is also participating in the peer review of a revision of the NLS instruction manual for literary braille transcribing. After NLS developed a Nemeth mathematics proofreading certification test, a CNIB Nemeth transcriber took and passed the test prior to developing a proofreading certification program in Canada.

In addition to BANA, CNIB and NLS are both involved in the International Council on English Braille, working to develop a unified braille code that will facilitate the easy exchange of materials transcribed into English braille to be shared throughout the world.

National Conferences

In 1986, NLS and the National Library of Canada worked together to coordinate an international Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals. Held in Cincinnati, Ohio, the conference brought together more than two

hundred librarians from the United States and Canada to discuss issues related to the theme Quality Effort - Quality Service. Euclid Herie delivered a major presentation, as someone from CNIB has done at each biennial conference since. Librarians from CNIB and other Canadian libraries now regularly attend and contribute to the conferences.

Advisory/Technical Committees

The NLS engineering section has participated, by invitation, in meetings of the CNIB Technology Committee and has offered comments on technical communications produced by CNIB. At the meetings, NLS staff apprised CNIB of NLS's technical goals and activities. The two groups discussed ongoing experiments and findings to preclude duplicative research while striving for technical compatibility.

Friends of Libraries for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals in North America

Working in support of free national library programs in the United States and Canada, the Friends of Libraries for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals in North America is a joint endeavor of CNIB and NLS.

Founded in 1991, this 350-member organization has as its mission:

> to heighten awareness and visibility of national library services for blind and physically handicapped individuals;

> to assist and promote library services;

> to provide cultural enrichment programs;

> to create and issue periodic communications on topics related to blind and physically handicapped individuals.

The Friends organization is the publisher of the International Yearbook of Library Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals, a journal of feature articles and research reports on matters of interest to the blind and physically h..ndicapped community; "A World Perspective of Library Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals," an educational large-print timeline poster and audio cassette version that chronicles nearly one hundred important events from the birth of Didymus in 308 A.D. to the publication of NLS's 10,000th numbered braille book in 1995; and Biography of the Blind, a reissue of James Wilson's classic book containing biographical sketches of blind individuals throughout history up to 1838. In addition, Friends members enjoy cultural recordings sent as part of their membership. Ishmael, a novel by Daniel Quinn, was

recently sent to Friends members.

Euclid Herie is vice president of the Friends. Rosemary Kavanagh is an ex officio board member.

Recent Efforts

NLS produced committee reports for the World Blind Union Assembly in a standard audio cassette format. All reports were narrated in English and French, checked for quality, duplicated onto cassette, labeled in both print and braille, packaged, and shipped to Toronto by August 22.

The fifteen English reports were received in late July and were subsequently recorded, reviewed, and sent for duplication to the Multistate Center East in Cincinnati, Ohio. Each title was duplicated onto fifty cassettes and labeled with print and braille labels generated at NLS. The fifteen French titles were narrated by Potomac Talking Books in Bethesda, Maryland, and were also sent for duplication to the Multistate Center East. Once the duplication and labeling phase was completed, the cassettes were returned to Quality Assurance for a final check and then sent immediately to CNIB and the Assembly. The project was completed four days ahead of schedule.

Copyright

Historically NLS has been obliged to obtain permission to reproduce print materials in special formats from a variety of sources. The most common method has been the mailing of a multi-part request form directly to a publisher, who in most cases grants permission on behalf of the copyright owner. This form, signed by the copyright owner or a designated agent, is returned, occasionally with provisions or limitations added. Another method is the checkoff box in space 8 of Form TX, the official application used by copyright claimants to register a published literary work with the United States Copyright Office. Here a copyright owner may grant NLS permission to reproduce the published work in recorded, braille, or both recorded and braille formats. Finally, some publishers have granted NLS blanket permission to reproduce their print materials in special formats.

One of the major obstacles in making print books and magazines available to eligible readers has been the length of time it can take to obtain copyright clearance. This difficulty is compounded when the request form must be forwarded to an agent of the original owner, or to a foreign publisher. Recognizing such complications, NLS entered into an agreement

with CNIB in 1988 to include a statement on the request form that would grant Canadian libraries and agencies permission to purchase titles transcribed into braille or recorded on master open-reel tapes at the same time that permission to create these titles in special formats is granted to NLS. The details of this agreement are covered under "Sale of NLS Books to CNIB"--noted earlier in this report. It is worth noting that this procedure on behalf of Canadian purchasers is successful, with permission granted simultaneously in most cases.

Recently an effort was launched by interested parties on behalf of blind readers in the United States, which culminated when U.S. Senator John Chafee put forward a recommendation to amend Title 17 of the United States Code to grant nonprofit agencies automatic permission to reproduce nondramatic literary works in special formats. The measure was signed into law by President Clinton on September 17, 1996. Now it is business as usual in matters concerning copyright till the logistical details are worked out. Obviously U.S. law does not extend beyond its borders, and it may be that CNIB must once again obtain such permission directly. The operating word here, of course, is "may." However, NLS has cooperated and will continue to cooperate in every way possible to smooth matters along.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

In this report I have briefly summarized Library of Congress activity on behalf of blind and physically handicapped individuals and touched upon a few selected cooperative efforts that have made access to recreational and informational materials a bit easier than it otherwise would have been.

It is an imperfect world and all of us are imperfect inhabitants. We librarians serving blind and handicapped individuals do have a common goal, however--more and better. We will continue to strive toward realizing this goal.

Thank you!

CONTRIBUTORS

Following NLS staff members have contributed to the NLS/CNIB activity reports contained in previous pages. Their assistance is recognized and truly appreciated:

Robert Axtell, Head, Bibliographic Control Section
John Bryant, Acting Head, Production Control Section
John Cookson, Head, Engineering Section
Robert Fistick, Head, Publications and Media Section
Ruth Foss, Head, Collection Development Section
Margaret Goergen-Rood, Recording Studio Director
James Herndon, Foreign Language Librarian
Robert Kost, Head, Quality Assurance Section
Robert McDermott, Automation Officer
Michael Moodie, Research and Development Officer
Y. Rathan Raj, Overseas Librarian
Mary Lou Stark, Acting Head, Braille Development Section